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Operation Policy Analysis: Sam Rayburn Reservoir

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14. ABSTRACT A combined optimization-simulation procedure was developed and applied to identify the optimal conservation pool storage allocation problem is formulated and solved as a constrained nonlinear programming (NLP) problem with multiple objectives. The Box-Complex algorithm is coupled with an existing generalized reservoir simulation model to seek a solution to the NLP problem. The solutions are refined by an iterative simulation process that allows input from planners and engineers who are involved in management of this system.					
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OPERATION POLICY ANALYSIS: SAM RAYBURN RESERVOIR

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SETTING

The Sam Rayburn Reservoir System includes two reservoirs in series: Sam Rayburn Reservoir on the Angelina River and B. A. Steinhagen Lake and Town Bluff Dam, known as Dam B Reservoir, on the Neches River in eastern Texas. These reservoirs are operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The system components are shown in Fig. 1.

Operation of Sam Rayburn Reservoir provides flood control, power generation, water supply, water quality maintenance, and recreation. Runoff from approximately 3,449 sq mi (8,940 km²) drains into the reservoir. The total storage volume of the reservoir is 561,000 acre-ft (691,713,000 m³); 289,600 acre-ft (357,076,800 m³) of the volume are allocated to conservation purposes, and the remainder is allocated to flood control. The installed capacity of the two hydropower units at the reservoir is 52,000 kW, and the "dependable" capacity currently is estimated to be 49,000 kW.

Dam B was constructed and is operated primarily for reregulation of releases from Rayburn Reservoir. The reservoir is operated also for water supply and for recreation. Total storage available is 306,400 acre-ft (377,791,200 m³).

Additional detailed information on Sam Rayburn Reservoir is presented in Ref. 8. Information on B. A. Steinhagen Lake and Town Bluff Dam is available in Ref. 6.

CURRENT OPERATION PROBLEMS

Due to the proximity of the reservoir system to the Gulf of Mexico, maintenance of sufficient discharge downstream of Dam B is critical to prevention of saltwater

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intrusion. This intrusion is detrimental because water is withdrawn from the Neches River for irrigation and for municipal and industrial water supply. The average maximum monthly discharge rates for recent years are shown in Table 1. Historically, a saltwater barrier has been installed downstream from Dam B during periods of little runoff because releases are reduced during these periods. With such a barrier in place, the downstream discharge requirement is reduced by approximately 1,000 cfs ($28 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$) because the need for water to prevent saltwater intrusion is eliminated. Subsequent discharge that exceeds the demand

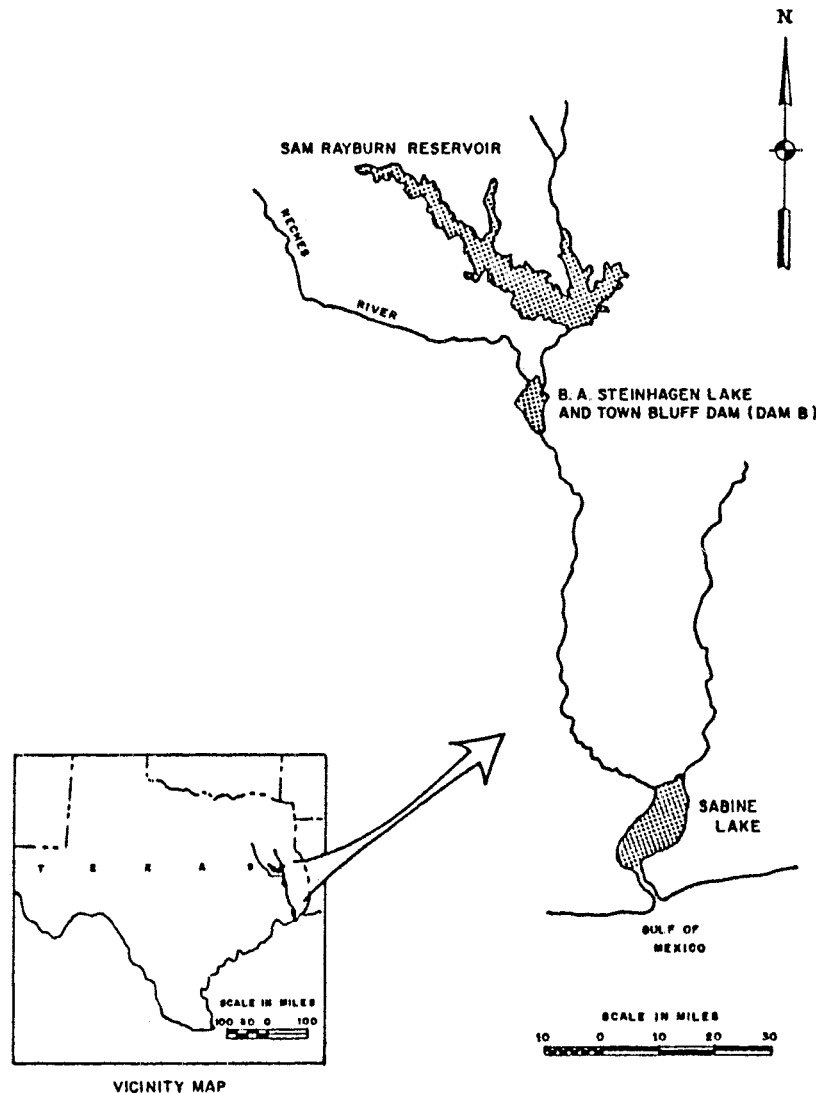


FIG. 1.—Sam Rayburn Reservoir System Components

by approximately 2,000 cfs ($56 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$) causes the barrier to be “washed-out.” Thus one of the operation problems is to select an operation policy that minimizes the number of times that a saltwater barrier must be installed.

Selection of operation rules that will yield the optimal hydropower production from Rayburn Reservoir is the second operation problem considered. The minimum acceptable energy output is defined in a contract between the Sam Rayburn Dam Electric Cooperative, Inc., and the Federal Government. The contract states:

RESERVOIR OPERATION ANALYSIS

. . . the government agrees, to the extent that water is available in the McGee Bend Reservoir (now Sam Rayburn Reservoir) above elevation 149, to make releases . . . as required for the generation of power, with such releases at least sufficient to generate power equivalent to 42,000 kilowatts for a minimum period of 75 hours per month for each of the six monthly periods from mid-April through mid-October of each year (8).

Additional useable power often can be generated, and, if so, is purchased by a private utility. Thus a dependable power output must be defined, and operating rules must be selected to provide the power with high reliability. The operation rules also should yield as much additional useable power as possible.

The facilities for recreation at Rayburn Reservoir and at Dam B pose another operation constraint: the reservoirs should be operated in such a way that the pool elevation fluctuations are not intolerable to those using the facilities.

TABLE 1.—Water Supply Demand Schedule: Sam Rayburn Reservoir System

Month (1)	Average maximum monthly demand, in cubic feet per second ^a (2)
January	250
February	300
March	700
April	1,100
May	1,400
June	1,700
July	1,400
August	800
September	450
October	350
November	300
December	250

^a 1 cfs = 0.028 m³/s.

In addition to other previously mentioned purposes, Sam Rayburn Reservoir and Dam B Reservoir are regulated to provide flood control downstream. The channel capacity downstream of Dam B is approximately 20,000 cfs (560 m³/s), so the reservoirs are operated to maintain flows at or below this capacity if possible.

SOLUTION METHODOLOGY

A combined simulation-optimization approach is employed to select an optimal operation policy for Sam Rayburn Reservoir System. This methodology is shown schematically in Fig. 2. The simulation model is a single reservoir model that accounts for water use throughout the system, satisfying all demands when possible and allocating the available water according to specific priorities when

OCTOBER 1981

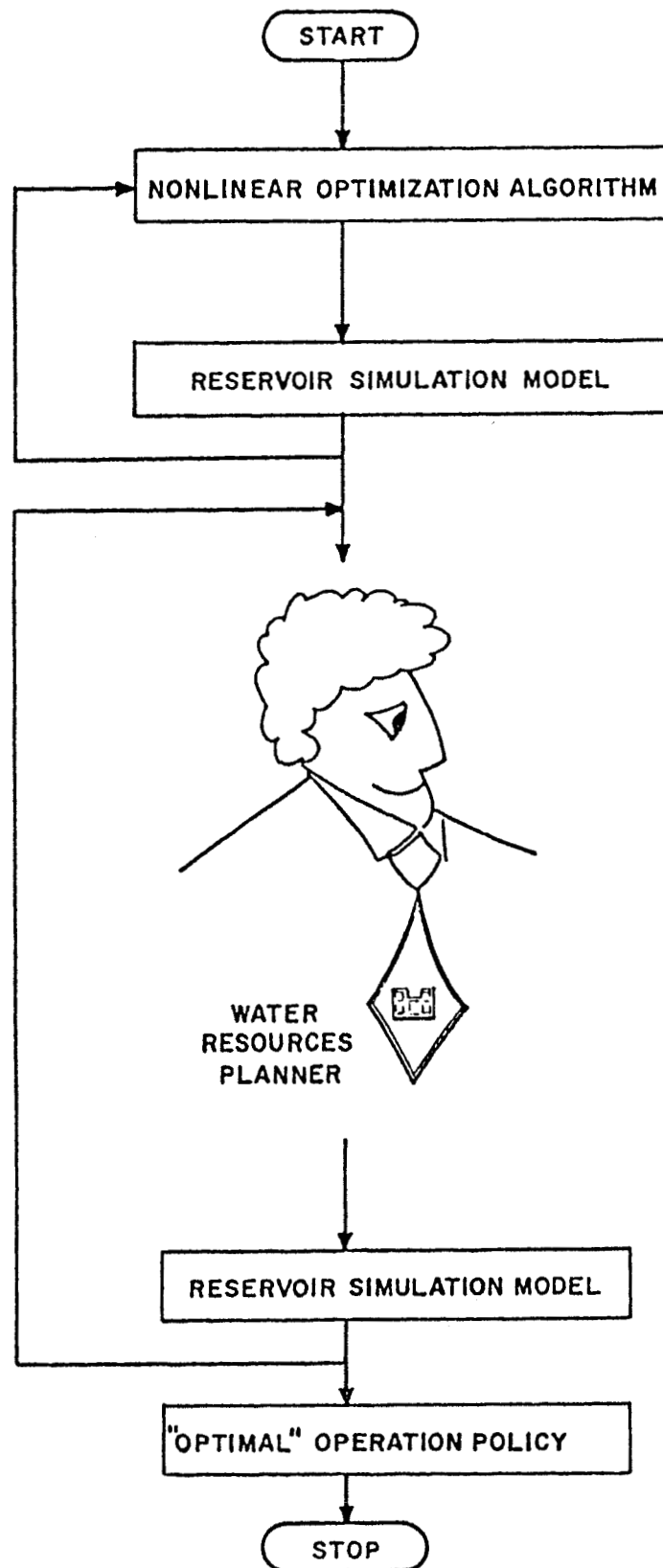


FIG. 2.—Schematic of Solution Methodology

RESERVOIR OPERATION ANALYSIS

conflicts exist. The simulation model is linked with a nonlinear programming algorithm that selects automatically the optimal operation policy for the reservoir system for the given data and with a user-specified objective function. A weighted combination of 10 indices of operation efficiency can be used to define this objective function. The operation policy that is identified as the optimal policy by the nonlinear programming algorithm is smoothed using engineering judgment based on experience with operation of the system, and system response with this smoothed policy is simulated. This step is repeated as necessary to obtain an acceptable operation policy. The general approach was suggested by Jacoby and Loucks (11).

Alternative techniques for selection of an optimal allocation of available storage have been proposed and were considered, including applications of linear programming (13), network flow programming (14,15) and dynamic programming (1,4,16). However, as Yeh et al. (16) point out, “. . . there appears to exist no general algorithm.” Each application of these mathematical programming techniques has required some development and research to select and to program the most efficient solution procedure. In this study, time constraints and budget limitations precluded such research and development, so a readily available, generalized simulation program was combined with readily available computer code for the nonlinear programming algorithm (12). This approach provides the important capability to simulate in detail the operation of reservoir system with a model that can easily be used independent of this optimization algorithm.

Simulation Model.—The operation of the Sam Rayburn Reservoir System is modeled with the Reservoir Yield Program developed in the Hydrologic Engineering Center (HEC), with modifications to simulate accurately the operation of this particular system and to model the format of the operation policy traditionally used with this reservoir system. The Reservoir Yield Program simulates the conservation operation of a reservoir system that includes one reservoir and one downstream control point. Constraints on discharge can be specified at the reservoir and at the control point. The model is designed for analysis of operation with a long time interval, such as one month. The methods of computation in the Reservoir Yield Program follow closely the procedures traditionally employed in hand computations. For each computation period, the reservoir release equals the maximum minimum flow requirement for all system purposes unless this conflicts with maximum permissible flows. In that case, the reservoir release is restricted to the minimum maximum permissible flow. Absolute control over the release is exercised by full reservoir and empty reservoir limitations. Power is assumed to be generated from reservoir releases up to plant capacity, with power head determined by successive approximations to account for variation of head with discharge. Flows are translated from the reservoir outlet to the downstream control point in a single period without routing. Further detailed description of the methods of computation employed in the Reservoir Yield Program is presented in Ref. 7.

Operation of the Rayburn System can be simulated adequately for the purposes of the study using the Reservoir Yield Program with a monthly computation interval because Dam B has no significant monthly carry-over storage capacity. Dam B can be represented as a control point, with average monthly outflow considered equal to average monthly inflow, and all water requirements downstream of Dam B can be modeled as requirements at the control point.

Modifications to the Yield Program required for simulation of the operation of the Rayburn System include the following: (1) Modifications to employ a storage level concept in operation of Rayburn Reservoir; (2) modifications to reflect the installation of a downstream saltwater barrier when the volume of water in storage in Rayburn falls below a specified value; (3) modifications to allow specification of power requirements and downstream discharge requirements as a function of storage in Rayburn; and (4) modifications to alter the system operation goals so releases required to satisfy minimum power generation requirement at Rayburn will have highest priority as required by contract.

Use of storage levels for specification of the operation rules for Rayburn Reservoir is accepted practice at that reservoir, so modification of the program to employ the levels is necessary if practicable operation rules are to be selected. Incorporation of storage levels for operation of Rayburn is accomplished by defining the conservation storage volume allocated to each of four imaginary zones illustrated in Fig. 3. At the beginning of each period of simulation, the

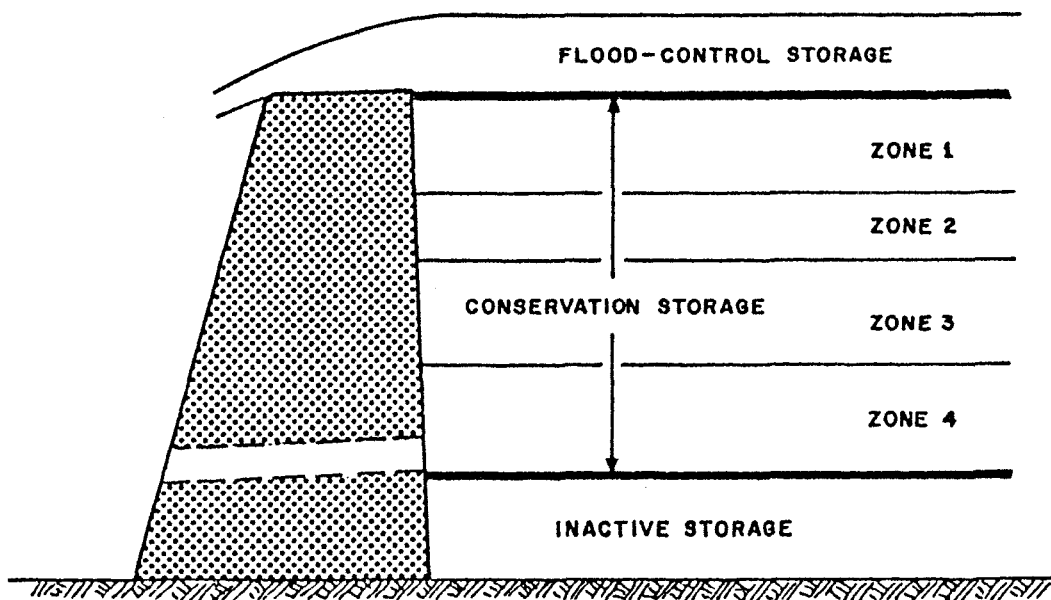


FIG. 3.—Imaginary Reservoir Storage Zones

current level is determined by comparing the beginning-of-period storage value with these bounds, and the at-site power requirements and downstream discharge requirements are set, as shown in Table 2. The Reservoir Yield Program is executed as before.

Additional modifications to the Reservoir Yield Program provide for simulation of installation and failure of a saltwater barrier downstream from Dam B. Installation of the barrier is assumed to occur when storage in Rayburn Reservoir falls to Level 3 or 4 and remains in either level for three months (thus simulating a time lag for decision and for installation of the barrier). When the barrier is not in place, downstream discharge targets are increased to prevent saltwater intrusion, as shown in Table 2. When the barrier is installed, the targets are fixed at the actual water supply demand until the barrier is "washed-out" by excessive discharge. This excessive discharge is defined as 2,000 cfs ($56 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$) or the downstream requirement plus 1,000 cfs ($28 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$), whichever is larger.

RESERVOIR OPERATION ANALYSIS

To model adequately the priorities of releases in the Rayburn System (priorities which are contrary to those incorporated in the Yield Program), the algorithm that selects the release for each period is modified to give highest priority

TABLE 2.—Power and Discharge Requirements: Sam Rayburn Reservoir System

Level ^a (1)	Power requirement at Rayburn Reservoir (2)	Discharge requirement below dam (3)
1	20% plant factor	Water supply demand + flow to prevent saltwater intrusion
2	75 hr of generation (approx 10% plant factor)	Water supply demand + flow to prevent saltwater intrusion
3	75 hr of generation 15 April–15 October	Water supply demand
4	No requirement in other months 75 hr of generation 15 April–15 October No requirements in other months	No specific operation requirement; shortages declared if discharge fails to meet demands of Level 3

^aNote that the convention of numbering levels for this study does not correspond to the convention in other reservoir simulation programs developed in the Hydrology Engineering Center (9,10).

TABLE 3.—Possible Objective Function Terms for Sam Rayburn Reservoir Operation Analysis

Function (1)	Description (2)
1	Energy shortage index ^{a,b}
2	Downstream discharge shortage index ^a
3	Number of times saltwater barrier is installed in period of analysis
4	Number of times saltwater barrier fails (is washed-out) in period of analysis
5	Average annual energy shortage ^b
6	Average annual downstream discharge shortage
7	Average monthly conservation pool elevation fluctuation
8	Average annual energy
9	Number of times conservation pool is emptied
10	Number of times downstream discharge shortage occurs

^aEach shortage index is computed by summing the squares of the annual shortage ratios and multiplying by (100/number of years of analysis). The annual shortage ratio is expressed as the ratio of the annual shortage divided by the annual requirement.

^bEnergy shortage is equivalent to "power" shortage computed by the Reservoir Yield Program. For this study, shortage is defined as follows: Shortage = maximum (0., Level 1 energy requirement – energy generated).

to satisfaction of the minimum power requirement at Rayburn Reservoir, as required by contract. With the modification, releases necessary to generate the required power, rather than certain minimum flow requirements, are given first priority.

TABLE 4.—Summary of Selected Operation Efficiency

Operation objective (1)	Plant factor, as a percentage (2)	Downstream demand schedule (3)	Discharge to prevent saltwater intrusion, cubic feet per second (4)	Number of times saltwater barrier is installed (5)
Maximize average annual energy	20	Maximum	1,000	57
	20	Average	1,000	49
	25	Maximum	1,000	57
Minimize energy shortage	20	Maximum	1,000	25
	20	Average	1,000	13
	25	Maximum	1,000	20
Minimize barrier installation	20	Maximum	1,000	8
	20	Average	1,000	1
Compromise	20	Maximum	1,000	14
	20	Average	1,000	6
	20	Average	1,200	6

*Values shown are for 51-year analysis period.

Note: 1 cfs = 0.028 m³/s; 1 ft = 0.305 m.

Optimization Model.—To determine the optimal operation policy for the Sam Rayburn System, the reservoir operation problem is formulated as a constrained nonlinear programming (NLP) problem. The decision variables in this optimization problem are the volumes of conservation storage to be allocated to each of the four operation levels. These decision variables are subject to upper and lower bounds; the volume allocated to each level must be greater than zero and must not exceed the total volume of conservation storage available. Also, the sum of the volumes allocated to the four levels must equal the total conservation storage available. The storage allocation currently varies seasonally, with seasons defined on the basis of significant change in rainfall pattern as follows: (1) March–April; (2) May–June; (3) July–September; and (4) October–February.

The optimization problem may be expressed mathematically as

$$\text{minimize } f(X) \quad \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$\text{subject to } 0 \leq x_{ij} \leq \text{STMX} - \text{STMN} \quad \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^4 x_{ij} = \text{STMX} - \text{STMN}; \quad j = 1, 2, 3, 4 \quad \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

in which X = a vector of all decision variables x_{ij} ; i = the index of storage levels; j = the index of seasons; STMX is the total storage volume at the top of the conservation pool; STMN is the total storage volume at the bottom of the conservation pool. If desired, this formulation can be modified to allow monthly variation of the storage allocation. The objective function, $f(X)$, is

RESERVOIR OPERATION ANALYSIS

Indices: Sam Rayburn Reservoir System*

Average annual energy shortage, thousand kilowatts-hours (6)	Average monthly conservation pool elevation fluctuation, in feet (7)	Average annual energy, thousand kilowatt-hours (8)	Number of times conservation pool is emptied (9)	Number of months in which downstream discharge shortage occurs (10)
34,264	.69	115,073	0	110
33,120	.56	115,072	0	32
47,634	.69	115,095	0	114
15,735	1.03	113,632	31	32
13,007	.93	113,971	31	17
27,624	1.10	112,689	60	58
25,670	1.01	113,529	19	31
25,856	.73	114,467	4	12
26,656	.93	114,250	0	28
24,857	.75	114,570	0	9
23,356	.81	114,411	0	4

evaluated by executing the modified Reservoir Yield Program with specified values of the decision variables.

The Box-Complex algorithm (3) is employed to solve the constrained nonlinear programming problem. This algorithm is a multivariate, constrained, random-search technique that seeks the minimum (or maximum) of a general nonlinear function subject to explicit upper and lower bounds on the decision variables (Eq. 2) and to nonlinear constraints on the decision variables (Eq. 3). With the Box-Complex algorithm, a set of feasible solutions to the optimization problem is generated at random, the objective function is evaluated for each, the "worst" solution is discarded, a new solution is determined with a projection technique, and the process is repeated until convergence criteria are satisfied.

Multiple Objective Analysis.—The efficiency of operation of the Sam Rayburn Reservoir System cannot be measured solely in economic terms, in terms of power generation, or in terms of failure to satisfy discharge requirements. These and other indices of operation efficiency, must be considered when selecting the optimal operating policy, and the trade-offs must be considered when selecting the optimal policy. For example, if the storage is allocated to maximize the average annual energy generated, the number of times that the saltwater barrier must be installed may be unacceptable. On the other hand, if storage is allocated to minimize the number of times the barrier must be installed, the energy generated decreases and may fall below an acceptable level. Neither solution is likely to be acceptable in terms of overall system operation goals, so some compromise solution must be selected.

A weighting method of multiobjective programming is employed to quantify the relative importance of various operation objectives (5). With this technique,

the mathematical objective function for the NLP problem is defined as

$$f(X) = \sum_{k=1}^p w_k z_k(X) \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

in which $z_k(X)$ = the value of index k of operation efficiency with decision variables X ; p = the total number of indices; w_k = the weight assigned to index k . The optimization problem then is to minimize $f(X)$, the weighted sum of the efficiency indices. Ten indices of system operation efficiency are included in the objective function available for selection of the best operation rules for Rayburn Reservoir. These are listed in Table 3. In application only, functions 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 are utilized for selection of the best-compromise operation study, with weights defined on the basis of analysis of optimal system operation for the objectives individually. The approach is conceptually similar to the Step Method suggested by Benayoun, et al. (2).

Selected Operation Rules.—Using the analytical tools described herein and data provided by the Fort Worth District and by the Southwestern Division

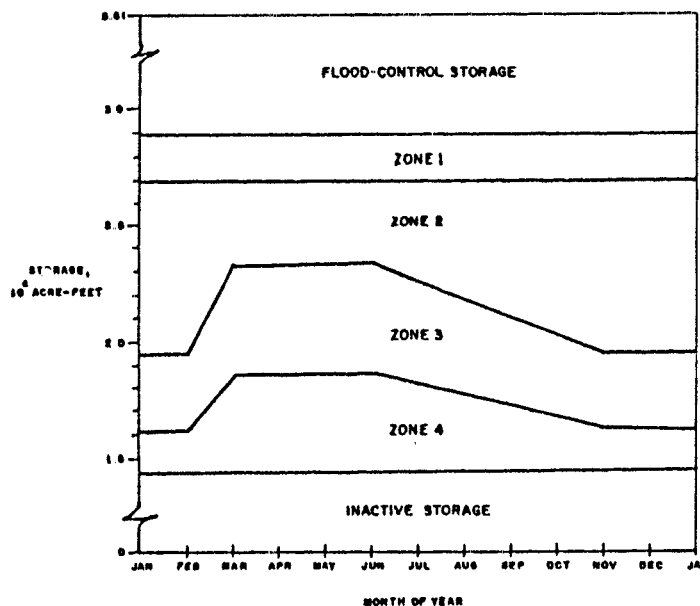


FIG. 4.—Seasonal Reservoir Storage Allocation

of the Corps of Engineers, best-compromise operation rules for the Sam Rayburn Reservoir System were determined for several alternative objective functions with different combinations of downstream demands, power requirements, and discharge necessary to prevent saltwater intrusion. System operation indices for several of these alternative policies are summarized in Table 4. Prior to selection of a policy for actual operation of the reservoir, these alternative storage allocation policies were reviewed by personnel of the Ft. Worth District and Southwestern Division, Corps at Engineers, by personnel of the Lower Neches Valley Authority (a Texas river authority), and by personnel of the Department of Energy (Southwestern Power Administration). As a consequence of this review, several smoothed, compromise solutions were identified, and the system operation was simulated with the Reservoir Yield Program to evaluate

RESERVOIR OPERATION ANALYSIS

the effectiveness of each. These results are also shown in Table 4. Fig. 4 illustrates the storage allocation of one of these operation policies.

CONCLUSIONS

From the perspective of the water resources planner, the most important conclusion that may be drawn from this study is that certain analytical techniques presented in the literature are applicable to practical resource management problems. The Sam Rayburn Reservoir operation problem is solved as a nonlinear programming problem, using an accepted simulation model to evaluate the objective function for each set of operation rules. The nonlinear programming algorithm employed is a simple, readily available technique. A multiobjective programming technique is used to develop an objective function that, in some sense, quantifies the importance of various system purposes.

From the perspective of the water resources system analyst, two important conclusions may be drawn from this study. The first is that planners and engineers involved in planning and managing water resources projects will accept application of systems analysis techniques to problems they face if such applications can be demonstrated to: (1) Provide additional information for use in decision making; (2) reduce the time, money, or computer memory requirements for plan formulation or evaluation; or (3) increase the project benefits by identifying solutions that satisfy the practical constraints on operation and are sufficiently resilient to respond to changing conditions. Integrated use of a nonlinear programming formulation with the Reservoir Yield Program for simulation of system operation, followed by an interactive smoothing process that allows input from the water managers satisfies these requirements.

In the process of developing operation rules for Sam Rayburn Reservoir, Corps personnel who are involved daily with the operation were consulted in definition of the problem, in identification of the critical characteristics of the system that should be modeled, and in evaluation of the solutions developed by application of the optimization-simulation methodology. The results of the initial simulations of system operations were reviewed carefully by Corps District and Division personnel to assure that the modified reservoir simulation program adequately modeled the system operation. This leads logically to the second conclusion: the resource managers/system operators must be included in the policy formulation-evaluation "DO-Loop" at many points.

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APPENDIX II.—NOTATION

The following symbols are used in this paper:

- f = total objective function;
- p = total number of objective functions;
- STMN = total storage volume at bottom of conservation pool;
- STMX = total storage volume at top of conservation pool;
- w = weight assigned to objective functions;
- x = decision variable;
- X = vector of all decision variables; and
- z = objective function.

Subscripts

- i = index of reservoir conservation storage levels;
- j = index of seasons; and
- k = index of objective functions.

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TP-20	Computer Determination of Flow Through Bridges	TP-58	A Model for Evaluating Runoff-Quality in Metropolitan Master Planning
TP-21	An Approach to Reservoir Temperature Analysis	TP-59	Testing of Several Runoff Models on an Urban Watershed
TP-22	A Finite Difference Methods of Analyzing Liquid Flow in Variably Saturated Porous Media	TP-60	Operational Simulation of a Reservoir System with Pumped Storage
TP-23	Uses of Simulation in River Basin Planning	TP-61	Technical Factors in Small Hydropower Planning
TP-24	Hydroelectric Power Analysis in Reservoir Systems	TP-62	Flood Hydrograph and Peak Flow Frequency Analysis
TP-25	Status of Water Resource System Analysis	TP-63	HEC Contribution to Reservoir System Operation
TP-26	System Relationships for Panama Canal Water Supply	TP-64	Determining Peak-Discharge Frequencies in an Urbanizing Watershed: A Case Study
TP-27	System Analysis of the Panama Canal Water Supply	TP-65	Feasibility Analysis in Small Hydropower Planning
TP-28	Digital Simulation of an Existing Water Resources System	TP-66	Reservoir Storage Determination by Computer Simulation of Flood Control and Conservation Systems
TP-29	Computer Application in Continuing Education	TP-67	Hydrologic Land Use Classification Using LANDSAT
TP-30	Drought Severity and Water Supply Dependability	TP-68	Interactive Nonstructural Flood-Control Planning
TP-31	Development of System Operation Rules for an Existing System by Simulation	TP-69	Critical Water Surface by Minimum Specific Energy Using the Parabolic Method
TP-32	Alternative Approaches to Water Resources System Simulation		
TP-33	System Simulation of Integrated Use of Hydroelectric and Thermal Power Generation		
TP-34	Optimizing flood Control Allocation for a Multipurpose Reservoir		
TP-35	Computer Models for Rainfall-Runoff and River Hydraulic Analysis		
TP-36	Evaluation of Drought Effects at Lake Atitlan		
TP-37	Downstream Effects of the Levee Overtopping at Wilkes-Barre, PA, During Tropical Storm Agnes		
TP-38	Water Quality Evaluation of Aquatic Systems		

TP-70	Corps of Engineers Experience with Automatic Calibration of a Precipitation-Runoff Model	TP-105	Use of a Two-Dimensional Flow Model to Quantify Aquatic Habitat
TP-71	Determination of Land Use from Satellite Imagery for Input to Hydrologic Models	TP-106	Flood-Runoff Forecasting with HEC-1F
TP-72	Application of the Finite Element Method to Vertically Stratified Hydrodynamic Flow and Water Quality	TP-107	Dredged-Material Disposal System Capacity Expansion
TP-73	Flood Mitigation Planning Using HEC-SAM	TP-108	Role of Small Computers in Two-Dimensional Flow Modeling
TP-74	Hydrographs by Single Linear Reservoir Model	TP-109	One-Dimensional Model for Mud Flows
TP-75	HEC Activities in Reservoir Analysis	TP-110	Subdivision Froude Number
TP-76	Institutional Support of Water Resource Models	TP-111	HEC-5Q: System Water Quality Modeling
TP-77	Investigation of Soil Conservation Service Urban Hydrology Techniques	TP-112	New Developments in HEC Programs for Flood Control
TP-78	Potential for Increasing the Output of Existing Hydroelectric Plants	TP-113	Modeling and Managing Water Resource Systems for Water Quality
TP-79	Potential Energy and Capacity Gains from Flood Control Storage Reallocation at Existing U.S. Hydropower Reservoirs	TP-114	Accuracy of Computer Water Surface Profiles - Executive Summary
TP-80	Use of Non-Sequential Techniques in the Analysis of Power Potential at Storage Projects	TP-115	Application of Spatial-Data Management Techniques in Corps Planning
TP-81	Data Management Systems of Water Resources Planning	TP-116	The HEC's Activities in Watershed Modeling
TP-82	The New HEC-1 Flood Hydrograph Package	TP-117	HEC-1 and HEC-2 Applications on the Microcomputer
TP-83	River and Reservoir Systems Water Quality Modeling Capability	TP-118	Real-Time Snow Simulation Model for the Monongahela River Basin
TP-84	Generalized Real-Time Flood Control System Model	TP-119	Multi-Purpose, Multi-Reservoir Simulation on a PC
TP-85	Operation Policy Analysis: Sam Rayburn Reservoir	TP-120	Technology Transfer of Corps' Hydrologic Models
TP-86	Training the Practitioner: The Hydrologic Engineering Center Program	TP-121	Development, Calibration and Application of Runoff Forecasting Models for the Allegheny River Basin
TP-87	Documentation Needs for Water Resources Models	TP-122	The Estimation of Rainfall for Flood Forecasting Using Radar and Rain Gage Data
TP-88	Reservoir System Regulation for Water Quality Control	TP-123	Developing and Managing a Comprehensive Reservoir Analysis Model
TP-89	A Software System to Aid in Making Real-Time Water Control Decisions	TP-124	Review of U.S. Army corps of Engineering Involvement With Alluvial Fan Flooding Problems
TP-90	Calibration, Verification and Application of a Two-Dimensional Flow Model	TP-125	An Integrated Software Package for Flood Damage Analysis
TP-91	HEC Software Development and Support	TP-126	The Value and Depreciation of Existing Facilities: The Case of Reservoirs
TP-92	Hydrologic Engineering Center Planning Models	TP-127	Floodplain-Management Plan Enumeration
TP-93	Flood Routing Through a Flat, Complex Flood Plain Using a One-Dimensional Unsteady Flow Computer Program	TP-128	Two-Dimensional Floodplain Modeling
TP-94	Dredged-Material Disposal Management Model	TP-129	Status and New Capabilities of Computer Program HEC-6: "Scour and Deposition in Rivers and Reservoirs"
TP-95	Infiltration and Soil Moisture Redistribution in HEC-1	TP-130	Estimating Sediment Delivery and Yield on Alluvial Fans
TP-96	The Hydrologic Engineering Center Experience in Nonstructural Planning	TP-131	Hydrologic Aspects of Flood Warning - Preparedness Programs
TP-97	Prediction of the Effects of a Flood Control Project on a Meandering Stream	TP-132	Twenty-five Years of Developing, Distributing, and Supporting Hydrologic Engineering Computer Programs
TP-98	Evolution in Computer Programs Causes Evolution in Training Needs: The Hydrologic Engineering Center Experience	TP-133	Predicting Deposition Patterns in Small Basins
TP-99	Reservoir System Analysis for Water Quality	TP-134	Annual Extreme Lake Elevations by Total Probability Theorem
TP-100	Probable Maximum Flood Estimation - Eastern United States	TP-135	A Muskingum-Cunge Channel Flow Routing Method for Drainage Networks
TP-101	Use of Computer Program HEC-5 for Water Supply Analysis	TP-136	Prescriptive Reservoir System Analysis Model - Missouri River System Application
TP-102	Role of Calibration in the Application of HEC-6	TP-137	A Generalized Simulation Model for Reservoir System Analysis
TP-103	Engineering and Economic Considerations in Formulating	TP-138	The HEC NexGen Software Development Project
TP-104	Modeling Water Resources Systems for Water Quality	TP-139	Issues for Applications Developers
		TP-140	HEC-2 Water Surface Profiles Program
		TP-141	HEC Models for Urban Hydrologic Analysis

TP-142	Systems Analysis Applications at the Hydrologic Engineering Center	TP-153	Risk-Based Analysis for Corps Flood Project Studies - A Status Report
TP-143	Runoff Prediction Uncertainty for Ungauged Agricultural Watersheds	TP-154	Modeling Water-Resource Systems for Water Quality Management
TP-144	Review of GIS Applications in Hydrologic Modeling	TP-155	Runoff simulation Using Radar Rainfall Data
TP-145	Application of Rainfall-Runoff Simulation for Flood Forecasting	TP-156	Status of HEC Next Generation Software Development
TP-146	Application of the HEC Prescriptive Reservoir Model in the Columbia River Systems	TP-157	Unsteady Flow Model for Forecasting Missouri and Mississippi Rivers
TP-147	HEC River Analysis System (HEC-RAS)	TP-158	Corps Water Management System (CWMS)
TP-148	HEC-6: Reservoir Sediment Control Applications	TP-159	Some History and Hydrology of the Panama Canal
TP-149	The Hydrologic Modeling System (HEC-HMS): Design and Development Issues	TP-160	Application of Risk-Based Analysis to Planning Reservoir and Levee Flood Damage Reduction Systems
TP-150	The HEC Hydrologic Modeling System	TP-161	Corps Water Management System - Capabilities and Implementation Status
TP-151	Bridge Hydraulic Analysis with HEC-RAS		
TP-152	Use of Land Surface Erosion Techniques with Stream Channel Sediment Models		

